



**KING'S PARK
ACADEMY**

High Expectations Lead to High Achievers

19 December 2019

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are very excited to introduce you to a new member of our team at King's Park Academy. Teddy is a 16 week old cockapoo who, with support from the staff and AAC members, is in training to become our school dog and is set to become an integral part of our school community.



You may be aware that there is a growing movement in many schools to reintroduce the concept of school pets as a way of teaching all children responsibility and providing a source of pleasure and learning. Of particular interest, is the current move towards 'wellbeing dogs' or 'reading dogs'. These dogs provide a source of comfort and relaxation for children and adults who may need 'someone' to talk to or just someone who will accept them and offer comfort or a calming influence in their lives. There is much evidence that children who struggle with relationships or with managing their own emotions gain a great deal from spending time with a pet.

In summary, academic research has shown that dogs working and helping in the school environment:

- Benefit children's social and emotional development
- Have a calming effect on pupils, particularly those with behavioural or learning difficulties
- Improve behaviour and concentration, reduced stress and improved self esteem
- Encourage expression and participation in more withdrawn children
- Foster a sense of responsibility
- Motivate pupils to think and to learn, as children have a high level of natural interest in, enthusiasm for and enjoyment of animals
- Encourage respect and thereby improving pupils' relationships with each other, parents and teachers
- Teach children to nurture and to have respect for life
- Help children build confidence in reading
- Reduce children's anxieties if they have a fear of dogs
- Reading to dogs has been proven to help children develop literacy skills and build confidence, helping to nurture children's enthusiasm for reading

King's Park Academy

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Part of Ambitions Academies Trust

We have chosen to have a cockapoo, as they are intelligent, devoted, loyal and clean. They are also patient, friendly, affectionate, love children and adapt well to new situations.

Potential concerns:

My child is allergic to dogs

It is understandable that some of you may be concerned about possible allergic reactions to a school dog. However, Teddy will be subjected to the most thorough cleanliness and grooming regime. He will also only be allowed in situations with people who voluntarily wish to work with him. Teddy was also chosen due to his relatively 'hypoallergenic' coat.

Will Teddy be properly cared for?

Teddy will be extremely well looked after. He will live with Mrs Dean and her family, including her 21, 19 and 13 year old children. He will come to school most days but will stay safely in the school offices until satisfactory training has been completed. He will then, in time, listen to pupils read in a controlled setting and will always be accompanied by an adult. He will undergo thorough and rigorous training (beginning with puppy classes) so will be extremely well-behaved. While Teddy is in school, he will have access to a dog crate in the office where he can relax during the day. This is where he will spend most of his time initially. Teddy has had his necessary injections and will visit the vet regularly for regular check-ups. If Teddy is unwell for any reason he will stay at home (with a dog sitter).

My child is scared of dogs

Some children may have had upsetting experiences and thus have a fear of dogs (or another animal). Teddy will only be in contact with children whose parents have given their permission. However, Teddy's training will help him be calm and gentle around children; he is already showing signs of a very loving and gentle nature. Experience and research have shown that, with proper guidance and handling, children can learn to overcome their fear of animals and grow in respect and appreciation for them.

The school has a 'no dogs' policy

Our school does have a 'no dogs' policy, however because Teddy is training to be our wellbeing dog, specific rules will apply to him and him alone (please see our school dog policy on our website). He will be on a lead at all times when moving around the school property and will always be accompanied by an adult. Teddy will also be fully insured to carry out his role thus allowing him to be on the school site.

We understand that it is not possible for all families to have a family dog and therefore we hope that this is an opportunity for children to share in a dog and gain from a relationship and contact on a regular basis. We hope you will join us in welcoming Teddy to the KPA family and embrace all that he has to offer the school.

Any parent who does not wish their child to interact with our school dog is invited to write to me to inform me of your wishes. Alternatively, please feel free to contact me by telephone. Also, if your child has any known allergies to dogs then please inform us.

Kind regards,

Lauren Dean
Principal